

sustainability of the Allegheny National Forest.

In my role as Republican leader on the House Agriculture Committee, I am dedicated to putting forth policies that promote natural solutions to keep our forests healthy for generations to come.

These policies include working closely with the Forest Service, a division of the U.S. Department of Agriculture, to manage our forests, foster healthier lands, and allow this economic engine to thrive.

By supporting the Forest Service and encouraging active stewardship, we can support healthy forests and rural communities for generations to come.

Currently, we have two bills focused on improving our forest management: the RESTORE Act from DOUG LAMALFA from California and the FIRE Act from DUSTY JOHNSON from South Dakota. These bills aim to improve and expedite forest management and restoration projects for healthier and more resilient forests.

Of course, we cannot talk about forest products without discussing the environmental benefits of a well-managed forest and forest productivity. We know the best solutions are natural solutions, not burdensome regulations or carbon taxes, but active innovation.

Landowners and foresters are among the strongest environmental advocates in our country. I recognize their efforts and continue to promote forest health by empowering the original stewards of our land.

According to the Forest Service, forests are sequestering 14 percent of all U.S. carbon emissions. That number could nearly double with policies that increase forest management, forest health, and forest production.

Active management, including timbering, holds the greatest potential for sequestering carbon and storing it indefinitely in forest products.

To help encourage new markets for forest products and forest health, I was proud to help lead the Timber Innovation Act. This bipartisan legislation, which was included in the 2018 farm bill, directly supports the development of cross-laminated timber and tall wood building construction.

Mr. Speaker, Forest Products Week is more than forestry or timber harvesting. It is a time to focus on the great resources our forests provide. From a natural habitat for wildlife, to an abundance of outdoor recreational activities, to carbon sequestration, to a strong rural economy, our forests, big and small, must continue to be utilized for our needs today and for our future generations.

TAKING A HARD LOOK AT THE NATIONAL STOCKPILE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Michigan (Ms. SLOTKIN) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SLOTKIN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to urge my colleagues to pass my

bill, the Strengthening America's Strategic National Stockpile Act, so that we never again are dependent on foreign manufacturers for the supplies we need to keep Americans safe.

This bipartisan bill, brought to this Chamber by eight Democrats and eight Republicans, would make sure our country never again endures what we went through in those early days of the COVID-19 pandemic when we all received those urgent calls, only to learn that our stockpile, the national stockpile, would only provide a fraction of what we needed, many pieces inside expired, some of them molding.

This bill would ensure that we have a properly maintained national stockpile of medical supplies so that our doctors, nurses, and frontline workers have the personal protective equipment they need to protect themselves while helping others.

Put yourself back into the mindset of April 2020: frantic calls and e-mails from essential workers begging for help. As cases of COVID surged, both in our hospitals and in our nursing homes, our frontline workers made it clear that they simply didn't have enough protective equipment to keep themselves safe.

In fact, the National Institutes of Health conducted a study on why we have a shortage of protective equipment. Through that study, they found that the U.S. anticipated—we knew—that our national supply would come up short, and they estimated that we would need 3.5 billion N95 masks to protect Americans from a pandemic that affected only a third of our country. This is why we cannot move on without cleaning up our system.

In 2020, every Member of this body was hearing from doctors, nurses, and first responders who were bravely battling this disease and improvised face shields and homemade solutions to protect themselves.

I still think about the physician in Brighton, Michigan, who compared his job to being a soldier on the front lines, wearing only a T-shirt and a baseball cap instead of body armor and a helmet; or the nurses in Mason, Michigan, who had to share one gown, not per person, but for the entire staff on a COVID ward.

In response, I found myself doing anything and everything I could to secure protective equipment for Michigan: calling mask manufacturers, negotiating with companies in China, and fighting for each and every shipment. I was sending Ziplocs of 10 masks to our nursing homes individually. If a Congresswoman is negotiating in the dead of night with a Chinese middleman for masks, our supply chains have officially failed us.

This searing experience shook me to my core. We can and must do better to protect Americans and to learn from our mistakes.

This bill, the Strengthening America's Strategic National Stockpile Act, would ensure that if States ever need

to turn to it, our stockpile will be fully supplied, maintained, and ready to go.

It requires constant maintenance and inventory checks to make sure items aren't expired. We need to make the distribution process transparent. It helps States to create their own local stockpiles, and it prevents waste of taxpayer dollars by allowing the stockpile to sell excess supplies to other agencies before they expire.

Perhaps most importantly, this bill incentivizes production of critical medical supplies right here at home, in the United States. Through a \$500 million program, the stockpile will partner directly with American manufacturers to expand capacity and strengthen our domestic supply chains.

Now, in Michigan, we get it. Before the pandemic, the mere mention of supply chains was enough to put some to sleep. But the last year and a half has changed that. The issue is now on the front page of every paper and at the heart of every key business and policy decision.

From masks to microchips, the disruptions we have experienced have forced us to pull back the curtain and take a hard look at the systems we rely on in our daily lives. Michiganders have been saying this for 30 years. If you outsource our supply chains too far to China, it becomes a national security issue, and it has.

Here in Congress, we have a responsibility to respond to the way this crisis has shook our communities for our first responders and our businesses. I ask my colleagues from both sides of the aisle to vote "yes" on this critical piece of legislation. Help clean up the mess that was on display last year. That is our job and our responsibility to the next crisis.

HIGHLIGHTING DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. TONY GONZALES) for 5 minutes.

Mr. TONY GONZALES of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to highlight October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

There is a lot going on in the world right now, and it is very easy to forget that we have millions of Americans who are living in a very abusive environment.

Many people walk around with scars that everyone can see. But also, many of us walk around with scars that nobody can see. In particular, I would like to highlight the women who are in this very difficult situation.

When I was 5 years old, I recall when my mother woke me up in the middle of the night to sneak us out of our very abusive home, and I remember spending time in a battered women's shelter. That moment will never leave me.

Looking back at it now, my mother was the bravest woman that I knew then and the bravest woman that I know now.